



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

made up, and the footlights burned sometimes red, sometimes blue, and sometimes amber, they acted for all they were worth, and under the stimulus of laughter from people who had paid to laugh and be interested, they acted better than they knew. Half the student-body went home determined to write plays.

As an enlargement of the co-operative scheme, starting with a nucleus of six playwrights, subdividing into six groups, and taking unto themselves each a cast and a full stage crew, it was a distinct success. Everybody got more real stage training and more social training than under our usual system with plays.

I forgot to say that the authors wrote all the newspaper stories and unselfishly left themselves in the background to glorify the actors, that they arranged the plays in what they considered the psychological sequence, and that one actor and one author, who in spite of merit did not fit into the general scheme withdrew on their own motion and took over the difficult tasks of stage management and scene shifting. It was a triumph for democracy.

And the authors had been given the only genuine incentive for writing—an audience. Think how many a poor potboiler in Greenwich Village is pining away for the lack of just that thing.

FRANK G. TOMPKINS

CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
DETROIT, MICH.

SOCIALIZATION OF THE COMPOSITION CLASS

My experience in socializing the composition class has been chiefly in the third-year *Digest* class, so called because we use the *Literary Digest* as the basis of our work. The account might be divided into preliminary step, organization, preparation, class in action, criticisms. During the first week of the fall term I announce that the *Digest* is sold to us for five cents a copy, and ask the children to find out how many of their parents are willing to have them subscribe. As fathers and mothers always consent gladly, we send in our order. After the first issue comes, and we grow somewhat acquainted with it—incidentally, the members of the class have come to know each other a little—we hold a meeting to organize.

Of course, the first step is to elect officers: a president, whose duty it is to preside at the weekly meetings; a treasurer, who receives all money, payable in advance on Monday, keeps a strict record of it,

and sends a money order at the end of each month (I usually check her by letting girls, in answer to roll call on Tuesday, reply, "Paid" or "Not paid," instead of "Present."), and in addition also writes all letters of complaint to Funk and Wagnalls, concerning shortage of periodicals, delay in delivery, or mistake in bills; a secretary, who keeps records of meetings and takes care of correspondence other than that concerning magazines. Next they select their "group leaders," three or four, according to size of class, who are individually responsible for seven or eight girls who are next chosen from the members at large, in the following manner: the girl who received highest number of votes—the leader of Group I—has first choice; the leader of Group II, second choice; next, third; and finally, the girl who ranked fourth. Alternation of selection (planned to keep one girl from getting all of the best material) continues until every girl is chosen except the president, who has duties enough without serving on a group once in every three or four weeks, as the case may be, for the groups take charge in turn of the program of meetings. Hence the secret ballot is used in all elections except that of group members, in which the first step in "give and take" appears when Leader I mentions the girl that Leader II had fully determined to have.

There are several steps in what I have called the preparation. First, the arrival and distribution of papers. This usually takes place on Thursday when the issue to be reported on one week from the following day, Friday, is given out by the treasurer, or by someone whom she selects while the former checks names from her list. In these stirring times, the news is sometimes rather antiquated at the expiration of a week; in that case, the girl gives her report changed in accordance with latest reports from the newspaper. Second, on the Monday preceding the day of meeting the group leader must have in her hand the names of articles selected by members to be reported upon. This gives the *leader* time to arrange and prepare an interesting affair, and individuals time to read, discuss with friends, or ask teacher any questions *before* Friday. Third, there is the matter of guests, for one or more of whom the group in charge is responsible—teachers, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, preachers, friends in general; the only requirement is that they have one. Invitations, in form of informal notes, give motivation for composition work here. Last year the class invited the president of the former year to take charge of a meeting and, at its close, give her opinion of the work of that class in comparison with her own. I wish you could have heard her criticism, inevitably

extemporaneous, of the strong and weak points in each group. This idea of guests has brought closer touch not only between classes, for girls often are excused from study periods to visit, and between English and other departments, for some girl must have her favorite teacher there to see the work, but between the church and school, for we have had several pastors and their wives, and most important of all between the home and school, for not only sisters and mothers, but actually fathers, have come—and said they enjoyed it, too.

The main feature, however, is the class in action. When the bell rings, the teacher is seated in a pupil's desk at rear of room. The girls enter and seat themselves wherever they desire—always as far front as they can crowd, always two in a "single" desk—social instinct, you see. *Digests*, open on desk, are in evidence, for the speaker may wish to refer to a cartoon, a special selection, or a map. The president, seated at the teacher's desk, calls the class to order, as a matter of form, not necessity. During the four years that I have had them, I have never seen a noisy *Digest* class; once in a while, they grow rather excited over some subject they are discussing, but the president has always been able to check that by "recognizing" the one to speak. The secretary calls the roll, to which each girl responds by telling the number of articles she has read during the week, usually including the first or leading one. In the record book if a girl reports "16 including first," she is marked 16*, if "16 minus first," just 16. Although the girls know that absolutely *no* credit is given for anything done in this class—it's their own social organization, conducted for themselves, by themselves—the average, I should say, is between twelve and eighteen articles per issue. Sometimes, to vary the calling of roll, the secretary surprises an individual by asking her to tell a joke, explain a cartoon, or to give a sentence summary of some important event. Next the treasurer gives her report. Last year this entailed special work because we were permitted to take one or two "free-will" offerings, the chief of which amounted to twelve or fifteen dollars for Armenian sufferers—the result of a report, without an appeal, given by a girl who so impressed the class that it appointed a committee of three to interview the principal, and secure his consent to the collection.

The president is then allowed not more than ten minutes for "quizzing" the class on the leading article if the group leader has told her it is not part of her program, or, more frequently, for asking questions—being sure to call on bashful girls—upon newspaper articles including those of the very morning on which they report, and you would be

surprised to see how many girls read the paper before they come to school in order to be able to reply.

At the end of her time, the president turns the meeting over to the group leader for the day, who takes a chair beside the president and secretary, who are already at the front of room. She usually gives a two- or three-minute talk on the thing which impressed her most during the week, leading up to the first article to be reported on by a member of her group whom she calls to the front. At the close of each report, any girl wishing to ask the speaker a question about something that was not clear, or to challenge some remark, or to add information, is welcome to rise at once and proceed. Sometimes most exciting and amusing conversations involving remarks from the majority of the class take place at this time. The leader is responsible for transitions between the articles reported on by her group. Naturally her program has to be planned with care, some days ahead. When all the members of her group have reported—each is supposed to take five minutes, but no serious criticism is made if, once in a while, she varies from three to seven minutes, if the report is less or more interesting—the leader turns the meeting back into the charge of the president, who, if time permits, calls upon any member of class, usually one who needs it most, to give an informal one-minute report on some article that impressed her. At the close of the hour, the president names two girls to whom all other members of class, who have been quietly “jotting down” criticisms during period, pass these papers. The former organize and classify errors for each girl, to be dictated and corrected during the first ten minutes of the following Monday period, and copied in a special section of her notebook so that she can watch her mistakes and work for improvement. If they “run over” that time, or, once in a while, if no serious errors have been made, the slip of paper containing corrections is handed to the girl to be copied. Erroneous ideas, indications of wrong influence, are considered during this time. As an outline for criticisms is worked out by class and teacher before the actual work of the year begins, each individual knows exactly what she is doing.

ALICE CALDER

EASTERN HIGH SCHOOL
BALTIMORE, MD.